

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Information on Labor Service
Units and Military Manpower Data

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1.

report containing information dealing with [redacted] Auxiliary Technical Battalion (PTP), and [redacted] the Technical Battalion (TP) into which the former was reorganized, up to December 1954. Some very general military manpower data is also included.

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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED, ADVANCE INFORMATION

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INFORMATION ON CZECHOSLOVAK PTP AND TP (LABOR
SERVICE) UNITS AND MISCELLANEOUS MANPOWER DATA

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Auxiliary Technical Battalion (PTP), some information on the reorganization of the latter into the Technical Battalion (TP)(following which its personnel were trained with weapons), and his service as a member of that battalion. Included is the discharge of older PTP personnel, military training of TP units, pay, food, morale, supply and demobilization, and replacement of TP personnel.

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In addition, some very general miscellaneous military manpower data is given at the end of the report.

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INFORMATION ON CZECHOSLOVAK PTP AND TP (LABOR
SERVICE) UNITS AND MISCELLANEOUS MANPOWER DATA

A. [] CZECHOSLOVAK PTP AND TP (LABOR SERVICE) UNITS

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1. Induction Procedure

a. Draft Call and Reporting

[] letter of instruction.

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from the Military District Headquarters (Okresni vojenske velitelstvi - OVV) in VYSKOV (N49-19, E17-00) (UTM XQ 4560) [] to report there [] group of about 60 [] individuals, who []

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At the office of the Military District Headquarters, they were first screened by members of the interviewing board according to data found on their conscript record cards. Then they received a complete physical examination and were classified into different categories, such as A, B, Cj, CD, Cv or C, as described below. []

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b. Draft Board Organization

The draft board at VYSKOV consisted of four members. The senior member or president was a Mr KALIVODA (fnu), who was also chairman of the District National Committee (Okresni narodni vybor). The medical member was a Doctor HULA (fnu), who was a civilian doctor in VYSKOV. The other two members were an unidentified Army major and an unidentified captain. [] these officers were detailed there only during the meetings of the board and their function was to classify or defer each man called, according to the established classification system. The doctor [] was hired by the local draft board and paid for his services.

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c. Physical Examination

During the same day [] about 20 [] inductees were examined by the doctor. Details of the examination were as follows:

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Chest: Normal X-ray taken

Blood Test: About 1/2 test tube of blood taken from the vein at the forearm. []

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Urinalysis: Sample taken for an unidentified test.

Eyes: Color vision was tested by reading a number arrangement on a page full of vari-colored spots. Distance sight was tested by alphabet charts of various sizes of print, at about five meters.

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Ears: Hearing was tested by holding a hand over one ear, alternately, and listening to doctor talking and whispering in varied tones and with varying volume.

Dental Examination: Teeth were checked to determine missing teeth or needed dental repair.

Flat Feet: Foot prints were taken while the feet were wet.

Bones and the Body in General: The doctor inspected to see if any bones had been broken and badly healed together and he asked questions to this effect. He examined to see if all fingers and toes were intact. [redacted] movability of fingers, arms and leg joints was also checked.

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d. Classification

Based on the information contained on the conscript's record card, which in addition to biographical data included the individual's political views and reliability, results of the physical examination, and the interviewer's recommendation, conscripts were classified into one of the following categories.

- A. Fully fit and capable for full military service; no physical deficiency.
- B. Fit and capable for full military service, but with some minor deficiency, such as wearing glasses.
- Cj. Limited military service owing to some physical handicap or injury, but capable of performing hard labor.
- CD. Not considered fit for general military service or hard labor. Could do limited or light work but would not be required to perform military type duties subsequent to basic training.
- Cv. Deferred because of some temporary physical disability or because of schooling or for some other unknown reason. Subject would be required to report to the draft board again in a specified time; for example, if deferred for a temporary physical disability, he would be required to report at the time he was cured or expected to be cured; if deferred for some other reason, he would be required to report at the end of the term of his deferment. Individuals in this category were given an unidentified document to show their draft status and reason for deferment.
- C. Rejected as unfit for military service because of a permanent physical disability. They were given an unidentified document to show their deferred status.

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[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] there were both "A" and "B" classified persons in the various branches of the Army. [redacted]

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2. Procedure at Reception Center at MILOVICE

a. Processing

A group of 20 draftees [redacted] were escorted the day following the initial reporting and processing at the Headquarters of the Military District by an unidentified lieutenant from VYSKOV to the military garrison at MILOVICE (N50-14, E14,58) (UTM VR 9267). There they joined a group totaling about 80 conscripts who had arrived from other unidentified draft board areas and were again given a brief physical examination but no further screening. They were issued army uniforms and were given about two days' free time before the start of training.

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b. Basic Military Training

[redacted] given a month of basic military training. [redacted] "Priřimac" ("Acquaintance" or "Introduction") with an unidentified Reconnaissance Company.¹ The basic training received during this month consisted mainly of close order drill, responsibilities of the soldier, saluting, military courtesy, and weapons training. During the last half of the training they were issued rifles and sub-machine guns and were trained in the handling and assembly and disassembly of these weapons, but did not fire them. They were told that firing was not a part of the training given before the oath of enlistment was taken. This oath was administered at the end of the basic training.

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3. Service with the Auxiliary Technical Battalion (PTP) at MIMON

a. Travel and Assignment

At the end of the month's training [redacted] a group of about 20 [redacted] were sent from MILOVICE to MIMON (N50-39, E14-44) (UTM VS 8112). They were sent by civilian train with an unidentified lieutenant as escort officer. Upon arrival they were greeted briefly by the commander of the 51st PTP (Pomocný technický prapor) Auxiliary Technical Bn, and informed that they were assigned to that unit and told that it was a labor unit. They were not told the reason for their assignment to this type of unit. Their address while there was P. S. 7/L Mimon (Posadkova Sprava 7/L Mimon).

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b. Organization of the 51st PTP Bn

The 51st PTP Bn had its headquarters and one company at MIMON, three companies at PRAGUE, and two companies at MILOVICE.

The battalion headquarters consisted of about seven or eight officers and about six career NCOs with grades of sergeant and SFC. The CO of the battalion was a Lt Col Josef ZIZALA, Engineer branch, and the rest of the officers were captains or lieutenants. [redacted]

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The company at MIMON consisted of about 90 to 100 enlisted men, an unknown number of non-career NCOs, and two officers. The commander [redacted] was a lieutenant, name unknown. [redacted]

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c. Mission and Training

The company at MIMON [redacted] was assigned the sole duty of farm work on land cultivated by the unit. The crops raised were grains, vegetables, and fruits. The grains were hauled away in the company's trucks to an unknown destination and the fruits and vegetables were used in the mess hall. [redacted]

[redacted] Supervision of the farm work and the on-the-job training of conscripts was usually done by NCOs with farm experience. [redacted]

It was common knowledge that the companies at PRAGUE and at MILOVICE were engaged in the construction of unspecified buildings or housing for military usage. [redacted]

The only military formations consisted of physical training and periods of about two hours of political indoctrination twice a week. The mess hall was operated by army NCOs who were assigned to the unit. [redacted]

[redacted] the rations not produced on the farm were drawn from army sources.

4. Reorganization of the PTP into the TP

a. Announcement of the Reorganization

During the summer of 1954, possibly in July, the CO and the Political Officer [redacted] called a company formation and announced the reorganization of the PTP to the TP. They stated that the TP units would get light weapons such as rifles, sub-machine guns, and light machine guns, their own insignia and that they would also receive military training and firing with the weapons, but that the main mission of TP units would continue to be service as labor units.

b. Weapons Training

Shortly thereafter all TP personnel were issued a basic small arm such as a variety of used, 7.92mm rifles or new sub-machine guns, "Zbrojovka", caliber 7.62mm, and received training and had brief familiarization firing with them. [redacted] Prior to that time only officers and career NCOs were armed. The military training was stepped up from about two hours per week to one whole day per week, usually Saturday, and consisted of field stripping, sighting and range procedures, and close order drill with the weapon.

Occasionally on a Tuesday or Wednesday they would have additional weapons training for two or three hours after normal duty hours. [redacted]

[redacted] this began about a month after the reorganization was effected.

c. Release of Older Members

After the reorganization of the labor battalions, release of members who had served two years or more began; many of these were older men being held in PTP units because they were suspected to be politically unreliable.²

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d. Movement of Battalion Headquarters [] to PRAGUE

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During August 1954 the headquarters group of the 51st TP, consisting of about 100 men and an unknown number of personnel of the battalion headquarters, was transferred to PRAGUE. The move was made in trucks of the unit which were escorted by the battalion officers, consisting of the deputy commander and about six other officers, all captains and lieutenants. The group headquarters [] were assigned to a part of PRAGUE called Stresovice but [] most of the men [] were billeted in a part of PRAGUE called Borislavka. The work they did there was construction labor, in the building of apartment houses which were to be quarters for army officers.

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5. Service in the Technical Battalion (TP) at PRAGUE

a. Organization of the Battalion

At the time of his service in PRAGUE with the 51st TP, the battalion consisted of six companies (four in PRAGUE and two in MILOVICE) with a total of about 1200 men, including the NCOs who normally did not perform the construction work assigned to the men.

b. Mission and Training

Members of the 51st TP in PRAGUE were assigned to duty as construction laborers under the supervision of civilian tradesmen and performed almost all types of labor jobs connected with the building of apartment buildings. The work hours were 0700 to 1500, five days per week, and military training with weapons was given on Saturdays. This latter training was normally conducted on the squad and platoon level. Their political officer told them that while their main mission was to furnish manual labor for construction work they were also considered a combat unit.

c. Unit Administration

[] the administration of the TP unit was the same as that of a normal army unit, with officers and NCOs in the usual command positions. The NCOs held the unit's formations and marched the men to work, held roll calls and conducted both military and political training.

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The NCOs could work at the same construction work as the men of their units if they chose; when they did, they were paid by the same scale as the conscripts, for the work they performed.

d. Messing Facilities

The company operated a mess hall under supervision of an NCO but the actual cooking and cleaning work was done by civilian women. The rations were supplied from unidentified military supply sources. [] their food [] better than that furnished the regular military units of the army, since they were paying for their food through payroll deductions for individual subsistence. [] the construction company had something to do with the improvement in their food and [] the rations were supplemented by outside purchase. They had meat every day and, in general, the preparation of food was better than before.

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e. Pay

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(1) Rates

[redacted] a basic soldier [redacted] received the normal military pay at the rate of 370 crowns (korun) per month in the old type currency. [redacted] working in the 51st PIP Bn as a farm laborer [redacted] 74 crowns in the new currency [redacted] normal military pay. [redacted] as a construction laborer in the 51st TP Bn in PRAGUE [redacted] the local pay rate for civilians in the same type of work [redacted] constituted a very substantial pay raise. Most of the conscripts [redacted] received approximately 1000 to 1200 crowns per month, but charges for food and lodging reduced the actual cash to about 300 to 350 crowns per month.

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(2) Savings Program

Strong pressure was put on the conscripts to save all or most of their remaining pay. A plan whereby one-half the remaining pay of each individual was withheld and credited to him as a savings to be paid him at the end of his service, was effected for each man. Of the other half, the person could receive it on pay day or he could have the army send it, or any part of it, to his family. [redacted] a person could have all of his remaining pay sent to his family if he could prove their need for it, but [redacted] this was done on an individual basis and the individual had to justify his request.

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(3) Pay Call

Pay day was on the 15th of the month, unless this fell on a holiday or Sunday, when payday would be on the 14th or 16th. There was no ceremony or formation. The duty NCO would call pay call by blowing a whistle or calling to the men, who already had been informed about what time they would be paid. They were paid on a "first come, first served" basis by the First Sergeant. Each person signed for his pay on an unidentified roster and then returned to work.

f. Supply and Maintenance of Individual Equipment

Supply of individual equipment for TP personnel came from unknown army sources. When the individual wore out some item of clothing he simply took it to the First Sergeant who would replace it with another like item. Such items were kept in stock in the unit supply room. [redacted] they were drawn from battalion supply. Some of the items were new and some, such as shoes, were repaired.

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The individual usually took care of his own clothing and did little jobs of mending, but because of the nature of the labor performed, both farm work and construction work, their work uniforms were in rather bad condition.

g. Post Exchange Facilities

[redacted] post exchange (Arma) in the caserne area [redacted] where such items as cigarettes, candy, beer, soft drinks, soap, and shaving items and some sport clothing were sold. None of these items were of foreign manufacture. No watches or jewelry were sold. The person operating the PX was a civilian woman. [redacted] supplies for this exchange came from civilian sources.

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[redacted] Prices were the same as in outside stores.

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h. Medical Treatment

[redacted] unit had only a small first aid station or dispensary, operated by an enlisted medical corpsman under the supervision of the battalion doctor. The unit had no dental aid station. The equipment in the first aid station consisted of small quantities of unidentified bandages, such items as scissors, splints, a few medical-type glass bottles, and a table. The same facilities were available in the unit after it moved from MIMON to PRAGUE.

Any serious illness or emergency treatment cases in the unit that could not be treated at this first aid station were sent to the nearest hospital. When the unit was at MIMON, this was a civilian hospital located in the city of CESKA LIPA (N50-41, E14-33) (UTM XQ 1460). At PRAGUE, it was an unidentified military hospital. [redacted] the decision to send a patient to the hospital was made by the corpsman and he did not call the doctor to check the patient at the first aid station.

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i. Morale

(1) General Status of Morale in PTP Units

[redacted] the morale in the PTP units was exceedingly low. Personnel were there unwillingly and did not generally sympathize with the policies of the Communist government. A majority of the men there were older, ranging between 30 and 45 years of age.² Much discontent and many arguments arose between these men and the younger personnel and also with the NCOs because of the former military grades, backgrounds or social standings of these individuals. There were frequent cases of overstaying passes or leaves and excessive drinking. During the hours of political instruction there was much ridicule, talking, and general lack of attention. On one such occasion the political period got so far out of control that, as a disciplinary measure, passes were discontinued for an unrecalled period of time. Usually the punishment for disciplinary violations was either verbal reprimand or discontinuance of privileges for a period of time. Generally the officers and NCOs did nothing about the arguments among the men.

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(2) Improvement of Morale in TP Units

[redacted] the reorganization of the PTP into the TP, the beginning of the release of the older men, and the fact that they were drawing the pay of civilian laborers for the same kind of work they were doing (construction work) caused the morale to go up a bit and it was not quite so bad as before, but it still was low. [redacted] at the time of his release in November 1954, all the men knew that the term of service had been set at two years and this helped morale, as the remainder of the men who had been in the PTP knew they would be out soon.

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(3) Leaves and Passes

Leaves were granted, but not often. They were given as a reward for good work, and some members with bad conduct or work records did not get them. Leaves could be from three to eight days. Compassionate leaves could also be given [redacted]

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j. Release Prior to Expiration of Term of Service

Before the reorganization of the PTP (Auxiliary Technical Battalions) into the TP (Technical Battalions), there was no definite term of service, and [redacted] the only releases were for bad health reasons. NFI. After reorganization into the TP, the regular two-year conscript term of military obligation applied. [redacted] there were no early releases from this

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reorganized unit except for health reasons: [redacted]

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k. Discharge and Demobilization**(1) Release of Older Members**

After the reorganization of the PTP into the TP in 1954, all persons who had served two years of duty or more, began to be released. In November 1954, [redacted]

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[redacted] they had already released about 600 of the 1200 men that formed the 51st TP Bn. These were replaced by approximately the same number of regular two-year conscripts. [redacted]

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(2) Travel from Unit to Home

Those being discharged were placed on special military trains with orders for their discharge and were to report to their respective District Military Headquarters (OVV office). They travelled in uniform and were to depart at their respective destinations. [redacted]

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[redacted] Upon reporting to the District Military Headquarters at VYSKOV [redacted] given [redacted] civilian identity papers (Obchanský průkaz) and released to civilian status.

l. Replacement of TP Personnel

Replacements for TP units came from the groups normally drafted for military service. It was a policy to assign to TP units personnel with previous experience or training in some trade which could be utilized in the TP, however many of the incoming replacements had no trade or training. [redacted] no one being held in service because of shortages of personnel with skills or trades.

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B. MISCELLANEOUS MILITARY MANPOWER DATA**1. Assignment of Personnel to Branches of Service**

[redacted] individual conscripts were assigned to a branch of service of the Armed Forces, Security Troops, or Auxiliary Labor Units by the individual's respective District Military Headquarters (Okresní vojenské velitelství) prior to meeting the interviewing draft boards, when only a short interview was conducted.

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2. Retention in Service

[redacted] it was general knowledge that no person was retained in military service beyond the prescribed term of service. This was true even in TP units after November 1954.

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3. Reserve Assignments

[redacted] reserve personnel had to keep their district military headquarters informed of their address and any changes in their address must be promptly reported.

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4. Military Districts in Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia was administratively divided into 19 regions called "Kraj". Each "kraj", or region, had its own military headquarters (Krajske vojenske velitelstvi). Further, these regions were sub-divided into "okres" or districts. [] each district also had its own military headquarters. (Okresny vojensky velitelstvi).

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5. Compulsory Military Training Program at Universities

[] students, [] had at their universities a six-hour one day a week compulsory military training program, for male students only, which was conducted by unidentified army officers thought to come from nearby garrisons for this duty. About 250 hours of training were given during an estimated school year of 42 weeks. []

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[] this military training was conducted in all universities and schools of higher learning, but not in the middle or intermediate schools. [] students completing this military training program received either an officer's commission as a junior lieutenant or some unidentified NCO rating, according to the student's grades during the term.

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6. Women in Military Service

[] no women in the technical labor battalions. Concerning other women in service, [] they were all volunteers on three-year terms and [] they usually performed either office work or worked in hospitals.

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1. [] Comment :

[] the company was being built up, as it had only two officers, both paratroop lieutenants according to the insignia they wore. []

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This insignia consisted of a metal emblem of a parachute about three or four centimeters long and about two and one-half centimeters wide, of either a light gold or silver color. On the shoulder boards were also small similar parachute emblems and the two silver stars of a combat arms lieutenant. The base color of the shoulder boards was gold with a red stripe (prusvit) and border stripe around the edge. The color of the cap braid was unknown, but the cap insignia was the normal Czechoslovak army officer's cap insignia.

There were between seven and nine NCOs (none were career NCOs) and the second year group of soldiers consisted of only about 10 men, all privates or PFCs, whose main effort or duty was unidentified work details and who received training separately []

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The company did not have any vehicles other than an unknown number of motorcycles with sidecars, nor did the company have any weapons other than old unidentified but conventional rifles and sub-machine guns.

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[redacted] more of these weapons there than there were men in the company. ([redacted] about 80 men were of the first year group and about 10 were of the second year group, in addition to about seven to nine NCOs.) During training the officers and some of the NCOs carried pistols.

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2. [redacted] Comment:

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older men [redacted]
in these units [redacted]

[redacted] were former army officers, men who had their own businesses, priests, or people of higher social standing and most were between 30 and 45 years of age. [redacted] they were held in this type unit for suspected political unreliability [redacted]

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